

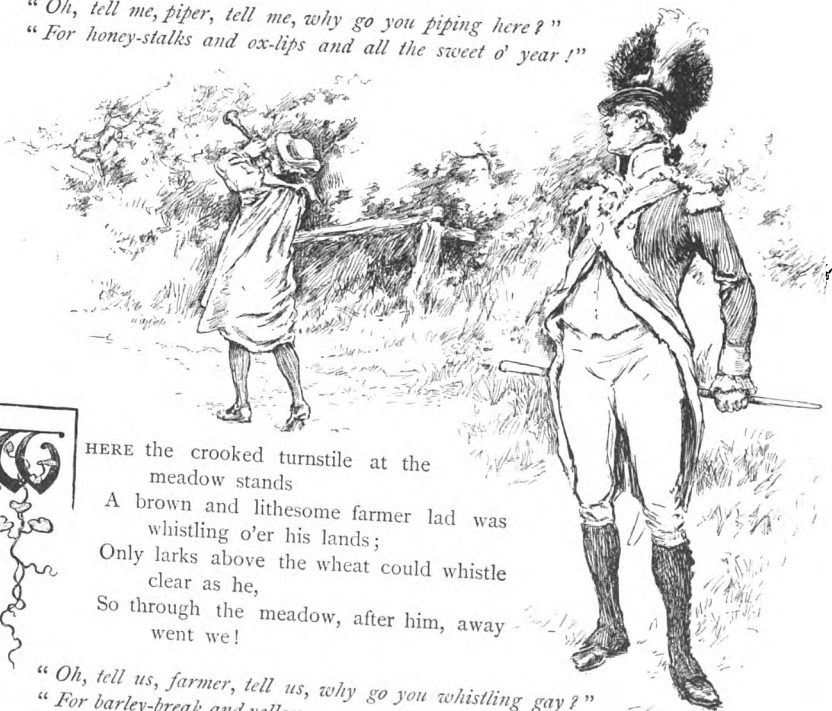
Down Durley Lane

BY VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.

OWN Durley Lane a-singing as I chanced for to go,
The brier was a-blossom, and the hedges were a-blow —
There I spied a piper, a-piping to the sky,
So down the lane and after him away went I.

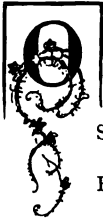
"Oh, tell me, piper, tell me, why go you piping here?"

"For honey-stalks and ox-tips and all the sweet o' year!"



HERE the crooked turnstile at the
meadow stands
A brown and lithesome farmer lad was
whistling o'er his lands;
Only larks above the wheat could whistle
clear as he,
So through the meadow, after him, away
went we!

"Oh, tell us, farmer, tell us, why go you whistling gay?"
"For barley-break and yellow moon and tossing of the hay!"



UT upon the highway from the
 nodding grass,
 A-trilling of a silver song, we met a
 lovely lass;
 She only smiled—I know not yet just
 how it did befall,
 But up the highway, after her, away
 went we all!



*"Oh, tell us, lovely, lovely lass, why go you singing
 there?"*

*"Why, but for love-in-idleness, and
 dancing at the fair!"*





HERE, about a milestone, where the hill began,
A-leaping and a-skipping we found the queerest man;
He hopped and he laughed — 't was very strange to see,—
So up the hill, and after him, away went we!

"Now, prythee, merry gentleman, why go you laughing, too?"
"Forsooth, fair mates, because I fared this way, and
met with you!"





AND lo, upon the hill-top, a mighty mistress gay,
Her satin petticoat was grand, her feathers fine were they!
Her buckles and her ribbons they flouted foot and head,
So, o'er the hill-top, after her, away we all sped!

*"Oh, mistress, mighty mistress, what brings you o'er the lea?"
But she tossed her head right haughtily, and proudly
past minced she.*



A
 ND then, with pipe and singing, with laugh and whistle shrill,
 The maddest music there was made a-dashing down the hill!
 Until upon the green ways, nigh to Durley Fair,
 We smiled at one another—and wondered we were there!
"Now, why go we a-faring about the green ways here?"
"For such a blithesome company, and all the sweet o' year!"

B

UT why the Piper piped a tune so keenly strange and sweet,
And why the Farmer whistled so joyous through his wheat,
And what the magic meaning of the lovely lassie's song,
And why the queer man should leap so merrily along,

*(And of that mighty mistress, who was so wondrous fine,—
With buckles peering through the dusk like fireflies a-shine),*

W

E never grew the wiser, nor learned what 't was about,
Although we danced upon the green until the
stars shone out;
And no one knows unto this day the how and
why and where—
Save that each followed someone else well-nigh
to Durley Fair.

*Yet this, methinks, is very clear—in truth 't is
passing plain—*

*I tripped it once, when the world was gay, adown
green Durley Lane!*

